

Bear Street was the original name for Fulham High Street, and it was used up to the end of the 18th century. Prior to the construction of the old Fulham bridge across the river Thames in the early 18th century, Bear Street extended from the river front, where the ferry docked, for a short distance north-easterly and then almost due north to the high ground by Colehill. Here the way divided, with one way extending north-west to Hammersmith (the existing Fulham Palace Road), and the other way extending eastwards to Walham Green (the existing Fulham Road) (Refer to Rocque's map, 1741-1745, for the street pattern).

2 It concentrated on the cultivation of vegetables, fruit and flowers. Nearly the entire land of the parish was in use by market gardeners who supplied the London market. The Fulham Fields originated in the early Medieval period, and they were bounded from Crabtree to Fulham Palace by the Thames on the west and North End Road on the east.

3 Refer to Rocque's map, 1741-1745, for the 18th century land use of this locality of the conservation area.

4 The long stretch of Fulham Palace Road leading to Hammersmith was built up circa 1900 onwards with low, quite genteel residential terraces on the west side. In the late 19th century this land was under orchards of apples and pears etc.

5 Cherry and Pevsner, 1991:232.

6 Bishops Park was formerly opened by Sir John Hutton, Chairman of the London County Council, in 1893. Since then the park had acquired a Bandstand, the site of which is now occupied by a recreation ground, a Drinking Fountain and a Refreshment Buffet, (the existing Tea Rooms (BOM)). In 1894 the Bishop's Walk was closed as a public way, which was undertaken to close the park at night.

In 1903 another extension to Bishops Park was opened. This consisted of the whole of the meadow extending along the river between Bishops Park and the site of Craven Cottage. This land was converted into an additional recreation ground. An adventure play centre for handicapped children, a pioneer of its type, was designed by Stephen Gardner and constructed in 1976 in the southern portion of this extension in the grounds of Fulham Palace.

The portion of the park extending along the north-west side of Bishop's Avenue and down to the river, occupied exactly seven acres and was known as the West Meadow. In 1808 Bishop Porteus commented: "*On the margin of the Thames runs a long range of rich meadows, which when covered with cattle ... form beautiful views from the house and different parts of the grounds*" (Feret, III, 1900: 209). The Thames used to flood this meadow at high tide and render it into a swamp. This was remedied by the construction of an embankment. Two acres of this meadow were separated from the rest, and a lawn was raised sloping down to the river and surrounded with a plantation of various forest trees.

Between the Moat and the river was the Bishop's Meadow. This piece of riverside land used to frequently be flooded by the Thames and, hence, became known also as Tide Meadow. The path which led round by the Moat, extending from the south end of Bishops Avenue to Pryor's Bank, was known as Bishops Walk, which was an elevated and a dangerous way with water on both sides of it. In 1808 Bishop Porteus commented (Feret, III, 1900: 210-211):

"On the south side of the house and just beyond the moat runs an embankment, to protect the house and grounds from the high tides of the river Thames ... and on the top of this bank is a public footpath which is called the Bishops Walk ... Many persons think this walk a great nuisance to the Palace; but I am of a very different opinion. It gives life and cheerfulness to the scene ... The female children especially, walking two by two, in their white dresses between the large green trees on each side

of them, form one of the prettiest and most picturesque processions that can be imagined."

In the 18th and 19th centuries Bishops Meadow with its chestnut and plane trees may have been a picturesque spot, but whatever beauty it once possessed had vanished a long time ago by 1900. By 1900 the removal of some of the old bridges with their ponderous piers and their replacement by structures which less impeded the flow of water necessitated the raising of the bank and the felling of trees. For some years the site had lain in waste and had been converted into a dust shoot. The old ditch, which skirted the Bishops Walk, had been filled in and the land raised so as to bring the surface above the level of high tides.

In 1884 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, as Lords of the Manor of Fulham, conveyed the freehold of the Bishops Meadow to the Fulham District Board of Works on the condition that the land should be laid out and maintained as a public recreation ground. In 1887 this land was conveyed to the Vestry of Fulham, and preliminary steps were undertaken towards the embanking and laying out of Bishops Meadow. In 1889 the Ecclesiastical Commissioners made the Vestry an additional grant of the West Meadow, thus increasing the total area of the proposed recreation ground to approximately 12 acres.

In 1889 a river wall was erected along the whole frontage of the site by Joseph Mears. This wall was built entirely in concrete with a facing of concrete blocks, and it was 1,760 feet long. It was 9 feet wide at the base and gradually tapered to the coping, which was 18 inches wide. The height of the parapet was 18° feet above datum. The wall terminated at both ends in a fine flight of steps 30 feet wide. The embankment was completed in 1893.

Facing the palace not far from the old sluice were the Bishops Stairs. This was a landing place used by the Bishops during the 17th and 18th centuries when river transport was a speedier method for

reaching London than road transport. The remains of this landing place existed until the late 19th century.

7 In 1894 Pryor's Bank and the adjacent site of Thames Bank had been acquired by the Vestry of Fulham with the proposal of creating a suitable approach to Bishops Park from Putney Bridge and making the land an open space. In 1896 the embankment of this site up to the abutment of Putney Bridge was undertaken by E. Wimpey and Co. This land was laid out as an addition to Bishops Park and was opened in 1900. The old garden of Pryor's Bank was preserved and incorporated into this extension. The garden contains stone figure sculptures – adoration, protection, grief and Ieda, which were presented by the sculptor J. Wedgewood. The sculpture affection, a tender mother and child, by Hermon Cawthorn, was added in 1963.

On the site of the existing Pryor's Bank stood Vine Cottage (1782), the exterior of which was covered with a luxurious vine. In 1837 this building was demolished, and a pseudo-Gothic house erected in its place, which became known as Pryor's Bank. In 1945 it was commented (Feret, III, 1900: 271):-
".....after due deliberation, therefore, respecting the situation upon a delightful bank of gravel, and the association which an assemblage of ecclesiastic carvings and objects connected with 'monkish memories', there collected, was likely to produce upon the mind, the new house was styled the 'Pryor's Bank' ".

In 1891 the grounds of Pryour's Bank were described as (Feret, III, 1900: 218):
".....skilfully disposed, laid out in imitation of Drop move; grottoes, fountains, and arbours diversity the scene; and a terrace-walk, extending 210 feet along the Thames, affords the opportunity of enjoying the ceaseless variety and passing scenery of the river".

The house was demolished in 1897. The Pavilion (the Bishop's Park lodge) erected on its site was used for the sale of refreshments, as a reading room and as a residence for some of the park staff.

8 It used to be a "lovely grove of stately elms", which underwent great changes in the late 19th century. Nearly the whole of its fine trees had been felled, and its *"sylvan beauty has been changed into a prim neatness in no wise in keeping with the ancient building"* (Feret, III, 1900: 96).

9 In the 18th century the riverside of Fulham was fringed with grand houses set in their grounds. The major survival of this building stock is Fulham Palace (Grade I and a Scheduled Ancient Monument). The palace is of far greater interest than might be expected from its "undemonstrative" exterior. It is one of the best Medieval domestic sites in London. It was situated close to the Thames in spacious grounds extending from the parish church of All Saints to Bishops Avenue. The palace of the first Bishops may have been located in the south-western corner of the grounds, where there were complexes of ditches and earthworks. During the Medieval period, Fulham Palace was one of several country seats of the Bishops of London. It became their main residence in the 18th century and remained so until 1973, although from 1956 parts of the palace were used for other purposes. A period of "deplorable neglect" and unsympathetic alterations followed. Fulham Palace was extensively investigated in 1987-88, and a detailed account has been published (Rodwell, 1988; Thurley, 1987).

The grounds of Fulham Palace were from the 16th century one of the most important botanical gardens in London, which were embellished in the late 17th century with many exotic species. They included tulips, walnuts and maple trees and a cork oak. This tradition was continued in the 19th century. Rocque's map of 1741-45 shows the palace to have been still surrounded by formal gardens. They were replaced circa 1770 by landscaped grounds. The Fulham Palace land enclosed an area of 36 acres. The northern portion of this land contained 14.176 acres. The southern portion, consisting of the site of the palace buildings, ornamental grounds, kitchen garden, etc. contained 14.077 acres.

The Moat which surrounded the palace was one mile in length, and when it used to be full, it had a water surface of 2.368 acres. It was filled in 1921-24. It may have been older than the palace, as excavations have indicated that it may have had its origins in pre-Saxon defences. The Moat was crossed at two points: by a drawbridge near the northwest corner of the Churchyard, which no longer exists, and by the existing ornamental stone bridge (Grade II) near the southern end of Bishops Avenue.

10 The sturdy late Medieval west tower is prominent at the end of Putney Bridge. It is a good example of the favourite Thames Valley type: ragstone, four storeys in height, diagonal buttresses, south-west turret, and a three light belfry window. Work on the tower was in progress in 1440, under the masons, Richard Garald and Piers Chapell, when stone was brought from Kent. The tower is 96 feet high, square in plan and consists of five tiers, terminating in a crenellated parapet with a small turrett at its south west corner. It is the only part of the original Medieval church which remains.

The tower was opened up in 1840, probably by Edward Lapidge, the architect of St. Peter's Church, who was also responsible for the alterations to All Saints' Church. Refacing and removal of the wooden spire took place in 1845 under the architect, George Godwin. The rest of the Church was demolished and rebuilt in 1880-81 by the architect, Sir Arthur Blomfield. This was undertaken in ragstone with Bath dressings, *"a faithful if dull imitation of a generously scaled late Perpendicular church"* (Cherry and Pevsner, 1991: 230). There is a very rich collection of monuments inside the church.

The churchyard (All Saints Church) to the east of the church contains a number of tombs, five of which are listed (Grade II). These are heavy sarcophagi of late 18th and early 19th century dates and include a fine sequence to the Bishops of London.

In 1880 during the reconstruction of the Medieval church, building excavations for the south buttresses of the existing church revealed the remains of the old foundation. They showed that an earlier church had extended further south. Other remains during the 19th century building works revealed evidence of a pre-existing church building. Among the rubble walls of the Medieval church were many stones which had formed part of an earlier building. The most noteworthy of these stones was one which still retained on one side of it the shaft base of a window jamb dating to the Early English period (c.1150). This stone was subsequently re-used in the Medieval Perpendicular church, because another face of it had been cut to the distinctive mouldings of that style.

In 1894 building works at the entrance to Church Gate immediately opposite the existing Billiard Hall (formerly the Church Hall) revealed the abutments of the former Churchbridge five to six feet below the surface of the roadway. The find consisted of a wall of Kentish ragstone of precisely the same type as that of the Medieval church tower. The block of rubble masonry was laid in lime mortar and was well constructed.

11 In the 18th and 19th centuries this roadway was considered "an old and interesting place", and the houses along the terrace were, even then, merited as of historic interest. In 1705 it was noted that "*Upon the passage leading to the Church, called Church Lane, are several very handsome, airy houses*" (Bowack, 1705, *Antiquities and Middlesex* quoted in Feret, I, 1900: 133).

Church Gate (formerly Church Row or Lane) extends from the south west corner of the High Street to the north-east entrance of All Saints' Churchyard, and it "ranks amongst the very oldest of the bye-ways of the parish" (Feret, I, 1900: 133). During the Medieval period, a passageway existed there. Adjacent to the Churchyard, there used to be a garden, which belonged to the Lord of the Manor. The site of this garden is now occupied by the Powell's Almshouses and the piece of land to

the west (which was added to the Churchyard in 1843). In 1392 when Bishop Braybrooke granted this garden to John Hunt, he stipulated that a passage 12 feet wide, extending from the Churchyard to the bridge over the High Street (Churchbridge), should be preserved for himself and his successors. This narrow passageway was the beginning of the existing Church Gate. At the entrance to Church Gate a bridge crossed an open ditch. This ditch extended down Fulham High Street (Bear Street) all the way to the river.

12 Steeple Close is "unusually tactful for its date". It is "*discreetly neo-Georgian apart from obtrusive garage doors*" (Cherry and Pevsner, 1991: 232).

13 They were designed by J.P. Seddon and erected in 1869 by W. Wigmore. They were "pretty Gothic pensions" facing the churchyard in an L-shaped plan, and provided accommodation for 12 people.